

getta clue

Manufacturer—

orders denim and pocketing material, makes pattern and guide for cutting and sewing, and sends to a contractor for cutting.

Fabric—cotton denim, 1-1/2 yards, \$6

Cutter—cuts pieces that make up the jeans. Most cutters work at an hourly rate, often not getting overtime. If the deadline is short, they may have to work 10 hours a day, 6 days a week to complete an order.

Sewer—sews together cut jeans pieces and pockets. Sewers are paid per piece. They have quotas for the number of pieces they must produce, quotas that are often set too high. Workers who can't keep up may find themselves out of a job.

Finisher—adds rivets, trims threads, sews on buttons. Some finishers get 1¢ for sewing on each button. At that rate, a worker would have to sew buttons on 20,600 pairs of jeans in a 40-hour week to make minimum wage.

Retailer—sells the product to you.

Bottom Line —

How much did you pay for your last pair of blue jeans? And how much of that went to the workers who made those jeans? Think about it!

Life Cycle of a Blue Jean, Sweatshop Style

Clearly, not every garment manufacturer or contractor operates a sweatshop. Many follow the law and pay their employees legal wages, and some employers go well beyond the minimum requirements of the law. The situations above are representative of conditions found in a sweatshop. Costs of materials and labor and the production process vary from one manufacturer to the next.

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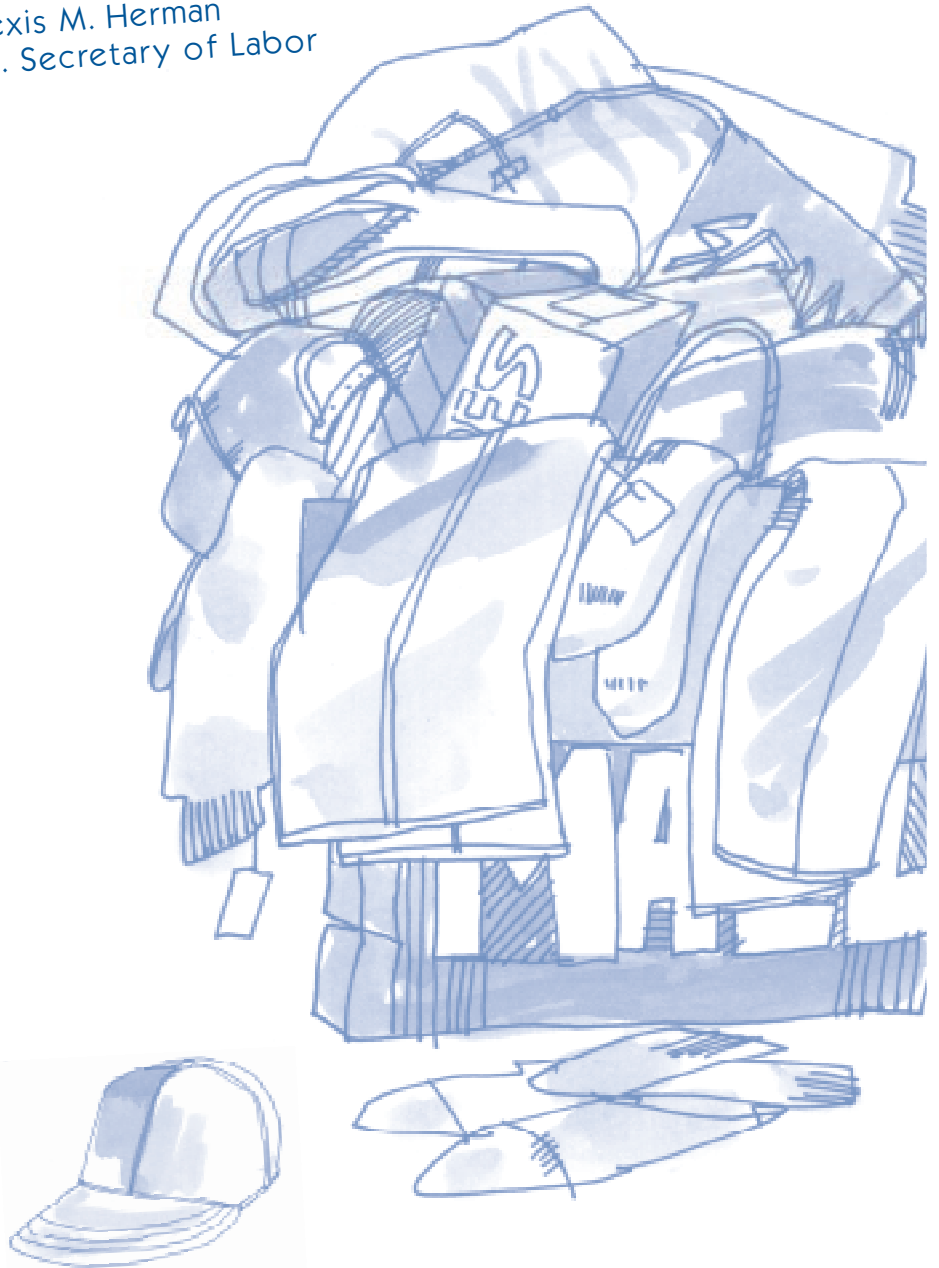


"If I could convince you of one thing, it's that you **can** make a difference in this world. The decisions you make, the actions you take, how you shop can help put an end to sweatshops and make a difference in the lives of so many workers."

Alexis M. Herman
U.S. Secretary of Labor

Working Teen

Many employers in the garment industry want to do the right thing and obey the law, but some don't. Some employers operate sweatshops, where people work in unsafe environments without getting the money they have earned. Sweatshops give a whole new meaning to the phrase, "get a job." Garment workers—some of them younger than you—work to pay rent and put food on the table. They are usually paid for each piece they sew, and they don't always make minimum wage, let alone receive benefits like health insurance. For example, at 15¢ per jeans pocket, you would have to sew at least 275 pockets in 8 hours to make the minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour. If you were only able to sew 200 pockets instead of 275, your hourly wage would be \$3.75—less than the price of a movie ticket and less than the legal wage.



Get Involved

Want to make a difference? You can help put sweatshops out of fashion and into the trash heap.

- ☒ You can ask questions where you shop about the clothes you are buying.
- ☒ You can ask where you shop whether they check on their garment manufacturers to make sure they're following the law.
- ☒ You can ask where you shop whether they support "No Sweat" clothing.

Do you know
how your clothes
were made?



Find out!



U.S. Department of Labor



Drop into our No Sweat Website at www.dol.gov.